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OtherWise

A Feminist Newspaper at U of T

Volume 3, Number 1, November 25, 1986

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Elizabeth Cash

Nursing students are working hard to shed their "sex pot" image.

PROFESSOR JANE PHILLIPS SPEAKS ON WOMEN IN SCIENCE

ENGINEERING FROM THE INSIDE

By Trudi Collins

"I was once picked up by a man in an art gallery--it was a rather brief affair--it only lasted for about five galleries as we walked along. When he found out I was a scientist and made considerably more money than he did as a history professor, he took off. He didn't even last for one more gallery!" - Professor Jane Phillips, BSc (U of T), MA (Bryn Mawr), PhD (John Hopkins), P.Eng, on the consequences of being a woman scientist in a man's world.

Professor Phillips is the only woman professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at U of T. On being approached for this interview she was quick to insist she is not a feminist. This increased my general unease as I entered her somewhat chaotic office for 'the interview'. I re-emerged an hour and a half later, having been well entertained by a pleasant, witty woman who proved to be far less formidable than I had expected. Our chat yielded more than just amusing recollections. Some of Prof. Phillip's more penetrating comments broached the subject of being taken seriously as a scientist. She was adamant that, in her area of specialty, her voice is as respected as would be an equally competent man's. However, she was quick to qualify this.

"When I was applying for jobs, both with my Bachelor's degree and then with my Master's, it would get to the interview and they would always ask 'How long do you plan to work?' (before leaving to have children). However, that no longer happened once I had my

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NURSING ORIENTATION

by Paula O'Sullivan

From a feminist perspective, the U of T Nursing Orientation has largely been a horrifying spectacle. The objectification and degradation of the Nursing Frosh both by themselves and by the Engineering Frosh has been part of the 'fun' for decades. In the past two and a half years, however, some interesting changes have occurred within the Orientation. However change does not come easily in a discipline with a long tradition.

'Discipline' is an appropriate term for Nursing especially when referring to the traditional education of nurses. The training was physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting; it took place within a rigid hierarchy that had to be respected and maintained. Uniforms, long hours and infinite rules were trademarks of the day; they also served to make progression through Nursing an initiation rite of great proportion.

Over the years however, rituals were abolished. 'Unquestioning obedience', that infamous dictum of Florence Nightingale, was gradually rejected. The Nurse's education was changed from all angles as Nurses (as women) became more conscious of their oppression and of the institutions involved in its maintenance. The Nursing students demanded and were granted autonomy.

Today, one of the few overt rituals left in Nursing at U of T is Orientation - the 'get to know your classmates and the campus all in one week' affair. Nursing Orientation traditionally provided a yearly opportunity to play up the images associated with the 'femaleness' of the faculty for the purpose of the Nurses' exposure to men, but, more importantly, of their exposure to the Nurses. As Nursing tradition goes, those men were the Engineers, the

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MORE OTHERWISE

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The law enters your bedroom.

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"The male gaze"

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NURSES CHANGING THEIR IMAGE

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predominantly male counterpart to the predominantly female faculty.

This annual event was notorious for promoting the stereotype of 'the Nurse as a sexpot' - by far the most popular image of the Nurse in this society. Orientation was an opportune time to learn and promote stereotypes while initiating social interaction. This rite of initiation was also important to the Nursing Frosh in that it served to take them from 'anomie' to 'identity' with a group. It was a process, a rite of passage,

> Aware of their plight, Nursing students are making real efforts to promote a better, more realistic image of what they are.

lasting one week. In the end it made them 'Nursing students', complete with all of its imagery.

During Orientation, interaction with the Engineering Frosh consisted of such antics as singing songs which praised the Engineers for their maleness, while promoting Nursing students as willing to increase their bust size or do whatever pleased the men in order to win their attention and acceptance; Throwing themselves to their knees when ordered to by the male Engineering students, being tied to cannons and carried off by the same group of men, participating in wet t-shirt contests, bedpan races and slave auctions - the list of antics is extensive.

Needless to say, all of these activities were tremendously popular. The events promoted heterosexual gamesmanship; after all, what is a 'sexpot' without a man? The very term is relative and male defined; it implies mixing of the sexes and objectification of one by the other. The novice Nursing students worked hard to please 'their men' during the fun and games. It was all an important aspect of establishing their identity with the group and with the infamous image of 'The Nurse'.

However, the next four years was another process - a process in which Faculty members worked hard to take the 'nursing student' to the point of 'Nurse'.

In these four years Nursing students meet the harsh realities; they realize the plight of nurses as women; they are shocked by the extent of the power struggle, the degradation, the stress and the helplessness that they experience in clinical practice and in the health care system. By then it is too late to undo what Orientation did. Nursing students reinforced their own harmful images before they realized how harmful they truly were; and the myths were reinforced at a time when the Nursing faculty and other faculties and colleges had their highest profile on campus. Nurses damaged Nurses in the name of fun and didn't realize it.

Two and a half years ago, a fourth year Nursing student decided that even if it was too late to undo what Orientation did, it certainly was not too late to change it for the future. Orientation could be changed - but first it had to be described, torn apart and thrown to the Nursing students and faculty so that all could see exactly how destructive it really was. Mark Sanderson's paper on the Nursing Orientation as a 'Rite of Passage' was a major paper; a that shocked everybody who read it or heard about it. No one had ever interpreted the images of orientation so vividly. Sanderson's paper was a veritable catalyst; a prescription for change. By attacking the 'true themes of the ritual', he did exactly what he had intended to do; he got things moving.

Tradition, however, is not given up easily, even when one is aware of its negative aspects. It has to be replaced with positive alternatives, which are not always that easy to discover, far less implement. Now that Nurses don't want to play the sexpot anymore, what will they play? The Orientation has only reflected images in society. People need roles. Women today are supposedly free to choose whatever role they desire. But when you get a group of women together who are about to enter a faculty with a long female tradition, and these women need to identify themselves as a group, what roles are there to project to the public besides the ones they've been offered by the public since time immemorial?

It will obviously take time to change the image of Nursing. Yet things ARE being done. Aware of their plight, Nursing students are making real efforts to promote a better, more realistic image of what they are. They are, for one, both men and women.

Last year, Nadine Romanyk, orientation leader for the 1985 Nursing Frosh, tried to implement some of her own egalitarian ideas into the programme. She did well given that all she had in terms of time was the summer. It was decided that elections for the following year's orientation leader would be held earlier in the school year to give the incumbent more time. Caroline Bays was voted Orientation Leader for 1986.

Bays stated that she had been personally motivated to cut out or change some of the sexist songs and activities even before hearing of Sanderson's paper. On top of her own initiative, however, there was also a rumour spreading that Faculty members were still so appalled by many of the rituals within the orientation that they were considering recommending that the rite be banned altogether.

This threat made Bays all the more determined. She said that she was convinced of two things: first, that the Nursing orientation "could be good clean fun without us having to prostitute ourselves" and secondly, that orientation was the most valuable event in first year in terms of setting up friendships and emotional support systems for a long and demanding four years - therefore, it would go on.

And it did go on. Thanks to Caroline Bays and her committee the 1986 Nursing Orientation was a great success. Over the summer Bays spent much time and energy changing the programme. She revised songs - songs which had previously involved provocative activity and which, revised, eliminated these antics. She also decided that there would no longer be cardboard Nursing caps on the froshes' heads nor Engineering hardhats on the heads of her committee members. To Sanderson these hats had been destructive symbols: the cardboard caps were a mockery to the Nursing profession; the Engineering hardhats were also

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We Are OtherWise

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OtherWise is a University of Toronto feminist newspaper and is independently funded. Any donations will be most welcome. All articles published in OtherWise do not necessarily represent the views of the collective. Only those articles and editorials signed by the collective have been agreed upon.

From The Collective

We recognize that one's position in the world is determined by a myriad of social, political, economic, and cultural forces. These forces, in varying degree, often constitute situations of outright oppression, and constantly limit and delineate one's possibilities. We are aware that our lives are determined in these ways, and that this process can be questioned, challenged and changed.

It is unfortunate that the role of a newspaper has traditionally been to disseminate ideas common to an elite, ideas which maintain the status quo. Knowing that the structure of society evolves, our newspaper intends rather to examine and transform the world, through a diversity of means. We will take an active role in relation to our environment.

Defining our paper as feminist, we choose to focus on the position of women. Women do not form a homogeneous group, but are extraordinarily varied; OtherWise welcomes input from this entire range of people.

We work as a collective, avoiding hierarchical decision-making. Combining our efforts in this way increases our ability to address the multiplicity of issues that affect women.

Most of us are new to the collective this year, and we are very excited to be continuing the paper. There are many levels of commitment and a plurality of ways to contribute to OtherWise.

Throughout the year, we invite you to help us create a strong other expression and a wise critique based on the experiences of women. *OW*

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PROTEST AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY AD A SUCCESS

by Elizabeth Czach

You may or may not have noticed that The Newspaper no longer carries an ad for the Metro Theatre, a porn cinema on Bloor Street. Although the ad is no longer there, it didn't just 'disappear'.

In mid-October, the Women's Centre received a phone call from a female student who was shocked by the ad. She had called the 'hot-line' number given in the ad and what she heard was a breathy voice climaxing in orgasm. The woman was appalled by the fact that this was being advertised in a newspaper aimed at the student body. In addition, the ad was a coupon for reduced admission to the theatre.

The woman called the Woman's Centre and wanted to know if anything was being done about this. Amber O'Hara, a collective member of the Women's Centre, received the call. She also phoned the 'hot line', then quickly went to work to find out what could be done.

O'Hara called The Newspaper. She was told to "write a letter" and "we'll see what we can do". O'Hara suggested that they call the number to listen to the tape.

Elizabeth Czach

Amber O'Hara outside the Metro Theatre.

MANAGER YIELDS TO ONE-WOMAN PICKET

The following week, O'Hara's letter was printed in The Newspaper describing the ad as "in very poor taste". The Metro ad also appeared in the same issue. O'Hara decided that further action must be taken as it appeared that The Newspaper wasn't going to retract the ad voluntarily. She organized a protest at the cinema.

On October 19th 1986, she arrived at the Metro Theatre equipped with a sign stating "Pornography is violence against women". She was the sole picketer.

The Manager, Karim Zidvi, arrived to point out that the picketing "won't affect anything". O'Hara, however, remained and Zidvi attempted to defend the theatre and the tape stating that "it's not pornography" and that he only shows "this shit" because he can't get any Famous Player's movies. The films shown at the Metro, he claimed, "look disgusting but they're not".

Although O'Hara had been told her protest "wouldn't affect anything", Zidvi agreed to pull the ad and change the phone message if O'Hara promised not to come back. A small victory appeared to have been won.

The next issue of The Newspaper (Oct. 28th 1986) did not carry the ad. It did carry a letter from a B. Baxter stating that The Newspaper "was endorsing (an) establishment to the student body" of "particularly vulgar character".

However the following issue of The Newspaper again carried the ad. The Metro manager was "out of town". The Newspaper saw no reason why they should pull the ad.

O'Hara called The Metro to remind them of their verbal agreement to remove the ad and threatened further action against the theatre. The ad disappeared and this time it seems to be gone for good.

The Newspaper, on the other hand still exists. In an article by Moira Daly, the actions against the ad were described as "unjustified" and "a systematic campaign of harassment". The Newspaper found the Metro ad not distasteful and Daly suggested the phone message was a "form of pornography available for those who wish to consume it". She suggested that if people are "shocked or disgusted by such material, it is best not to seek it out". Answering an ad in a newspaper is hardly seeking it out. Daly went on to say that "fanaticism should be stamped out now".

> The films shown at the Metro, he claimed, "look disgusting but they're not."

This action was hardly the "extremism of an individual or a small group". It was a simple response to what, not only O'Hara, but many women found offensive. If we are not at liberty to express our rage in productive actions, then how can we express it? *OW*

BILL 7 UNDER ATTACK

by Megan E. Robertson

As many of you may know by now, Bill 7 is an omnibus bill that, among other things, will amend the Human Rights Code to forbid discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. This bill is now due for its third reading in the legislature and until recently it had a good chance of being passed. However, the Coalition for Family Values, which includes REAL Women of Canada, the National Citizens Coalition and the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops among others, have begun to organize massive letter and telephone campaigns to M.P.P's while launching an expensive multi-media effort to spread hate propaganda directed at defeating the bill.

> The majority of Canadians *do* support this bill and it is only a small but vocal minority that opposes it.

Because of the controversy, the liberal caucus is trying to put off the bill and is even considering a 'free-vote' on the part of the bill that includes mention of sexual orientation. However, David Rayside, a member of the commitee that is lobbying for the passage of Bill 7 says that "nothing is definite and there is no sign of the bill coming up soon". He also stated that "anything could happen and when it comes down to the actual vote, I believe that we would win it". Even so, Rayside urges every one to continue lobbying for the Bill's passage as it is very important to let our provincial M.P.P's know that the majority of Canadians do support this bill and it is only a small but vocal minority that opposes it.

Show your support by writing a personal letter to your M.P.P. If you don't have time, there are form letters available at the Women's Centre at U of T. Also, phone your M.P.P., Attorney General Ian Scott (965-1664) and Premier David Peterson (965-1941). Tell them that you expect them to be working for the passage of Bill 7. *OW*

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE
How come you fired Ms. Richardson and Mr. Thomas?
Well, we wouldn't want a couple of homosexuals polluting the atmosphere of our noble institution with sexual innuendo and moral depravity, would we, darlin'? (heh, heh)
PINCH
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Jennifer McIntyre

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Season's Greetings from the Staff!

AN INTERVIEW WITH ACTIVIST ROSA DUENAS MORALES

THE STRUGGLE OF WOMEN IN PERU

by Natasha Waxman

Rosa Duenas Morales is a political activist and feminist in Peru. Peru is one of the world's poorest countries, beset with huge social and political problems. Ms. Duenas holds office in the municipal government of Lima, Peru's capital, and has founded a shelter for battered women there. She has also founded the Families of Political Prisoners group, and has been instrumental in the establishment of programs to aid the hungry, particularly children. Her strong criticisms of the government, and of a social system which is particularly oppressive to women, have gained her prominence and many enemies in Peru. She visited Canada recently, and spoke to OtherWise.

INT: What has brought you to Canada?

ROSA: I was invited to Toronto last March by Ruth Castanera of the Latin American Women's Collective here. At that time Ruth was looking for someone involved in women's issues who was also connected to the human rights situation. Besides my political work, I have also been interested in human rights for a long time. I was not directly involved until they (the military government) took my own son prisoner. Then I felt it was necessary for women and relatives to organize for the defense of our children. I helped found the Families of Political Prisoners group which tries to support relatives of political prisoners and find out what is happening with them. I have come to Canada to give testimony and talk about my experiences.

INT: What is your experience? How did you come to be a feminist leader?

ROSA: I am an Indian from the countryside. I became involved after my husband abandoned me and I was alone with three children. My women neighbours knocked at my door to take me to a meeting at the community centre. But I was alone and ashamed, so the first and second times I said no, I didn't want to go. The third time, they just took me by the hand and dragged me. They taught me what solidarity is. From them I learned to lead a meeting, or to protest, how to speak in a strong voice. (Pause) This path I have chosen has cost me a lot. I have been a member of a political party on the left for sixteen years. A lot of us gave full time to the movement and our families suffered. My mother died of TB while I was working. My son was imprisoned. We had to face government forces; some of us were wounded (She points to scar on her hand), some were killed, but as you can see, we keep going.

INT: So there's a strong sense of community among Peruvian women?

ROSA: Yes. There has to be. There are so many with nothing--it's a great psychological strain. There is no money for food or medicine or anything. The women must support each other or they can go crazy. This is why we try to get the women together in groups. We hold dances, or day trips, anything.

INT: How organized are women politically?

ROSA: We are organized in the popular sector and the poor areas. There are 1600 committees representing 3 million in Lima, mostly in the barrios (poor districts). The women workers have recently held a congress, but there is a great deal lacking. In the national government the men have all the higher positions, and even in the Left, where I am from, there is the same problem. Even in the party, the women are expected to help win elections, but they still aren't treated equally.

INT: What is the position of women generally in Peru?

ROSA: The society is very 'machista' (male-dominated). In all classes women are used as objects, with no personal freedom.

INT: Is there a big problem in Peru with violence against women?

ROSA: Yes. It is worst in the social sector where I come from, the poor. When a woman attempts to have any control or to make a decision for herself--to be a leader politically, to go to an assembly, even to go to a dance or the movies--she may be beaten. One woman I know was constantly beaten for eight years. The man had no job; she never had food for herself or her children. The poverty creates unbearable frustration. Some women are beaten with sticks, some are kicked, others are sexually violated. And the violence continues, because the women are affected psychologically, and may begin to beat the children. Then the older children beat the younger children, and it goes on and on.

Rosa Duenas Morales

Rosa Duenas Morales

INT: Are you hopeful?

ROSA: Of course. Otherwise we would have committed suicide long ago. More and more we create awareness among women: we tell them it is not fair to have to work all day with a child on your back and then have to clean the house and cook all night without help. If we do not take control and participate on a political level, men will walk all over us...we are struggling also for our children. My own daughter was raped--we must prepare ourselves and our daughters, educate them in matters of gender and struggle.

INT: Do North American women have a role in helping Peruvian women?

ROSA: In Peru it is different from here (Canada). We, the poor, must struggle for clean water, or land, or food. We must struggle for laws that favour the people. Women here can help by being aware of our problems, and telling others. We also need material help, because we have no resources to accomplish our goals. Fundamentally, the aims of all women are the same. Brutality and mistreatment affect all women. Sooner or late, we are all beaten down. They abuse our self-image; they use our bodies to sell Coca-cola. But that is not what we are about...women's role is not only to produce food and children. The true duty of women is to organize, to struggle and triumph over odds. To be able to love and vindicate the rights of our children, everywhere. That's what we're about. *OW*

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LESBIANS AND GAYS ON CAMPUS

by Nicola Crawhall

Last year was a sad year for us all at the University of Toronto. We felt a sense of loss, of absence. Something was missing. After all, how can you be happy, without being gay?

The only evidence of us on campus were Homo Hop posters, not the best liberation literature available. Tres underground!

Do not despair. We are back in full force. Yes, Virginia, there is a gay and lesbian community at U of T.

The Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Group has recently begun to meet on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. It is sponsored by the Sex Ed Centre. It offers an informal, relaxed atmosphere with discussions of lesbian and bisexual concerns. Meetings are reported as being quite uplifting and fun. Additional information is available at the Women's Centre.

The Lesbian and Gay Academic Society has been resurrected this year. Presentations and lectures are focused on the more intellectual side of lesbian and gay life. Organizers say that in past years the group has tended to attract graduate students. This is by no means meant to discourage budding intellectually-inclined undergrads to attend this year. Meetings will be held once a month on Friday nights, in association with Gays and Lesbians at U of T (GLAUT).

Speaking of which, GLAUT is presenting an entirely new image. Weekly meetings held on Friday nights consist of discussions, films, lectures, and other novel plans to bring lesbians and gay men together.

GLAUT has the reputation from years gone by of being male-orisnted. This year there is a special emphasis on making the meetings attractive to women as well as men. By making women's issues more than marginal and gearing advertising techniques more toward women, GLAUT is slowly redefining itself. For listings of times and locations of these meetings, check weekly in the Varsity and The Newspaper.

The support is there for us. Don't hesitate to take advantage of it. It's about time lesbians and gay men show a presense on campus. COME OUT and join us! *OW*

A SPACE: A GALLERY FOR WOMEN'S ART

By K. Brophey

A room of one's own. Is not enough.

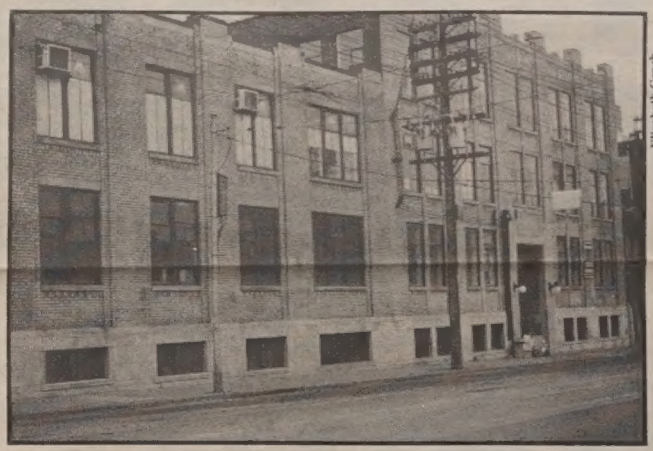
Ontario has been without a women's art gallery since March 1986 when Gallery 940 was forced to shut down due to financial difficulties. This latest attempt to establish a women's cultural space in Toronto failed after only a few years. The Canada Council currently gives core funding to only three galleries which might be described as alternative women's cultural spaces: Women in Focus (Vancouver); Powerhouse Gallery (Montreal); and Video Femmes (Quebec).

Very few galleries in Toronto regularly feature women's art. Artist-run galleries, which do not receive ongoing administrative costs funding, must rely on project cost grant funding. Resources and programming are directed toward fund-raising.

Money talks. A Space was established in 1971 as the first artist-run centre in Canada. It has the largest annual operating budget ($225,000) of all such centres.

A Space recently moved to 183 Bathurst (at Queen) and occupies 5,000 sq. ft. in a building where the Women's Art Resource Centre is also located.

Unlike most artist-run centres, A Space has an open-shop policy: all members are entitled to vote. Much of the art shown at A Space is political/community oriented. Womes art, video, performance and electronic art are shown at A Space.



Elizabeth Crach

A Space Gallery, 183 Bathurst at Queen.

'Graphic Feminism', an exhibit organized by the Women's Archives and shown at A Space last spring, documented 16 years of the Ontario women's movement: posters, leaflets, buttons, etc. covering issues such as choice, racism, equal pay, daycare, violence, etc. A Space also occasionally sponsors events such as the screening of 'Still Sane', a series of sculptures and textures in video form which was hosted by the artist Persimmon Blackbridge.

Upcoming events at A Space include plans to premier a video produced in New York documenting organized violence against lesbians. 'Just Because of Who We Are' by Abigail Norman will be screened Dec. 3. 'Playing With Fire' a feature length video exploring lesbian sexuality will be screened Dec. 11.

For more information on special events and exhibitions/installations: A Space, 183 Bathurst, 2nd floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2R7 Tel (416) 364-3227/8. Gallery Hours: Tues-Fri 10 - 5, Sat 12 - 5. *OW*

THE "BIBLE" OF PSYCHIATRY LABELS WOMEN

MENSTRUATING WOMEN IN THE HANDS OF PSYCHIATRISTS

by Maureen Gans

Disbelief and anger are the two most common responses that I'm greeted with whenever I attempt to explain the proposed new categories for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual - III (DSM-III). The DSM-III is the manual used by psychiatrists and psychologists to diagnose and categorize their patients. It has been referred to on more than one occasion as the 'bible' of the American Psychiatric Association. The DSM-III is important in diagnosing patients so that an appropriate treatment can be worked out. It is a very powerful tool in more ways than one, and categories, once introduced into the manual, are often blindly accepted and used.

The APA is in the process of revising the DSM-III. The committee on personality disorders advocates the inclusion of two new categories which will be extemely harmful to women in particular. These are: 1) self-defeating personality disorder (formerly called masochistic personality) and 2) periluteal phase dysphoric disorder (better known as PMS - pre-menstrual syndrome). Self-defeating personality disorder refers to behaviour that has been traditionally reinforced in women: nurturing, self-sacrificing, unempowered, etc. Because women have been taught that this type of behaviour is expected of them they behave in this way in order to AVOID pain - the pain of rejection, both personal and societal. To say that this behaviour is self-defeating not only ignores social norms and expectations, but does nothing to promote growth in therapy. It focuses negatively on the woman rather than looking at the causes of her unhappiness and the reasons she remains in unhappy situations. As Dr. Paula Caplan notes: "To a female and a male displaying the same behaviour different motives will be attributed. Rather than being called 'masochistic', a hardworking father is likely to be admired as a good provider, for example, and the husband of a difficult wife is likely to be called a saint for putting up with her." (How many women have been called saints for putting up with 'difficult' husbands?)

The second category (perilutal phase dysphoric disorder) is nothing more than labelling PMS as a MENTAL illness. As ridiculous as it sounds, the APA wants to focus on this hormonally-based, PHYSICAL syndrome as a psychiatric disorder, thereby encouraging society to say that some women go insane once a month. If this category is included in the new manual it will no doubt be used to keep women from being hired in responsible and well-paying jobs.

It seems obvious that women would react in anger to these proposals. Psychiatrists and psychologists should be just as outraged. These categories are so lacking in scientific evidence that it is hard to believe that they weren't laughed out of the first set of hearings into this matter, held by the APA in November, 1985. The psychiatric community prides itself on its scientific approach, its ability to research and THEN reach the appropriate conclusions. I believe that the attempt to include these two categories in the revised manual not only reflects a lack of scientific principles in the APA, but also glaringly demonstrates the sexism and stereotypes that exist in the therapeutic professions.

The final vote will be held December 12 and 13, 1986. Any letters or petitions of protest against the inclusion of these two categories should be sent to: Dr. Paula Caplan; 252 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V6. Monetary contributions will also be gratefully accepted. *OW*

Collage by Chris Glady

SEXUALITY CONFERENCE

REFLECTIONS ON COMING TOGETHER AGAIN

By Iris Wilde

In the past month I've spoken with family and friends, with other students at U of T and with women from all over North America during Coming Together Again, a women's sexuality conference. We've been speaking of sex. The euphemisms may have changed since the days when we talked about 'the birds and the bees', but the hesitation, the initial reticence, the sense of risk-taking has not.

Why is talking about sex different than talking about other aspects of our relationships? Why has sex become dis-integrated from other activities, placed apart from our daily lives? Why do discussions about sex need to take place in a safe environment, under carefully controlled conditions?

In Sex Power and Pleasure, Mariana Valverde writes that "'Talking sex' is a problematic activity, and not just because of modesty and repression." She cautions us that: "When we say we are talking in a personal way about sex, what we are generally doing is one of the following: humiliating ourselves in the hope of being granted absolution; bragging about our daring in sexual experimentation; proving our correctness by fitting our acts and thoughts into a particular moral/ethical framework; or apologizing for breaking either traditional moral values or what we perceive to be feminist standards." Valerde emphasizes that talking about sex only as isolated 'autonomous' individuals can hinder social change. It is important to develop "community discussions about sexual ethics and about the relationship between sexual life and other aspects of our lives."

Gillian Hanscombe, in the novel Between Friends, expresses a positive view. A women's meeting, where 'perfect strangers' talk openly about sex, where a woman speaks about the non-sexist sexual techniques she and her male lover are experimenting with, inspires the character Meg to write: "I felt really excited by this while she was talking, because it meant that people don't have to remain locked up within the sexual stereotypes society invents. Women need to share this information in order to encourage each other other's attempts at experimentation and exploration." Amy, another character from from Between Friends, reiterates: "Do you think there is something dreadful about discussing one's intimate relationships? Hardly anything else is worth discussing."

Elizabeth Czach

The women's meeting Coming Together Again was billed as "a gathering of sexually diverse feminist women interested in exploration, challenge and solidarity in the area of sexuality." The conference, organized by Side by Side, a feminist resource group, took place at OISE on November 7, 8 and 9. It consisted of three keynote addresses, a panel discussion and more than 30 workshops focusing on a variety of issues from 'Lesbian Sexual Ethics' to 'Loving Men'; from 'Sex and Parenting' to 'The Poetics of Desire'. It offered encouragement and support for open discussions about sex and sexuality. In the workshop 'Eroticizing Equality', Susan Cole emphasized listening when women speak about sex and believing what they have to say. Participants noted that it can be liberating to hear another's experience of sex and 'what turns them on'. By discussing and working to eroticize equality we hope to discover how to have sex in a way that won't hurt us. We feel that such discussions can help to redefine power, to understand our strengths and to recognize our options. They are opportunities to expand our sexuality, learn to accept ourselves and others, and reinforce our entitlement to sexual pleasure.

Debbie Gregory, during her keynote address 'Sexual Identity, Sexual Politics and Sex', remarked that the conference offered different perspectives on the things she had been thinking about on her own. She feels that we have a responsibility to pass on the information that we've discovered--that we need to make this information available to women entering the women's movement--that we can't assume that all women have had access to all information about sex. Gregrory pointed out that the dialogue on sexuality has helped to legitimize lesbianism and challenge male patterns; to make social changes to and reclaim our language.

In Connie Clement's workshop 'Not Enough! Enough! Too Much!', we questioned our standards of what's okay and what's not okay sexually. We discussed problems related to desire, how to sustain desire, and how to resolve differenct levels of desire. This workshop stressed sharing solutions and strategies--those 'tiny little things that have helped'. It offered identification, comfort, options for change and hope.

Why is talking about sex important for women? Why was Coming Together Again important? Only a few of the conference events have been mentioned here in detail, but they all offered a forum for sharing information (for giving and receiving power). There were discussions that showed us ways of re-integrating sex into our daily and political lives. We learned to help ourselves, to ease pain, to change, to speak collectively, to reinforce ourselves, and to take risks. By speaking of sex, we have answered some of the questions we brought with us to the conference, and asked others that will continue to challenge us.

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Hanscomebe, Gillian E, Between Friends. London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1983.
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PROFESSOR JANE PHILLIPS SPEAKS ON WOMEN IN SCIENCE

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doctorate."

It would seem that a woman's commitment to her job is in question until she has 'proven' herself with the appropriate number of degrees. Several times during the interview, Prof Phillips pointed out that things have changed a great deal since she was a student. She recalled having been told by a job interviewer that he really couldn't give her the job because the plant had just been completed and had no women's washrooms. (I can imagine his recommendation report: Qualifications = excellent, sex = inconvenient.)

On-the-job discrimination of a less bizarre sort is evident in Prof. Phillips reminiscence of working for Dupont in the U.S., in the mid 1950's: "Women were not really involved in research jobs, more in information gathering. Women weren't hired as professional engineers."

This concern is as relevant now as it was then. When asked if it was true that while women are solicited for jobs by companies trying to meet quotas, they are only offered entry level dead-end jobs, Prof. Phillips said firmly: "As long as you are good enough you will get ahead. The point is to take advantage of these hiring procedures and then prove yourself."

When asked if men seeking careers had an advantage over women in that they tend to be more assertive about their worth, Professor Phillips quickly pointed out that while it may be to a man's advantage initially, ultimately it is performance that counts. "It may take a woman longer to rise on the career ladder. We, as women, were brought up to be too polite...it's taken us a while to grow out of that!"

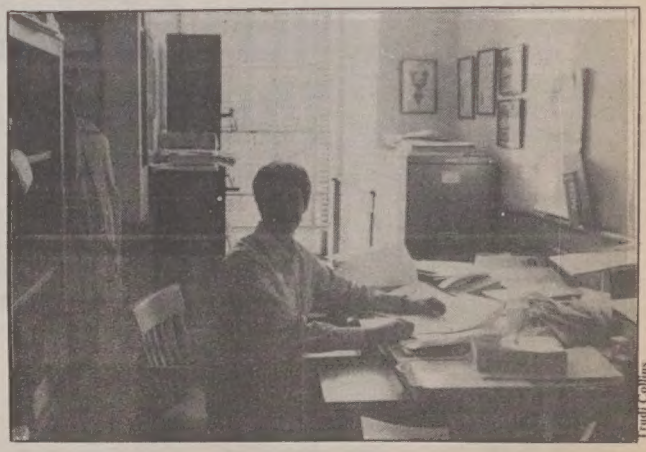
Changing the subject from career women to women who choose to stay at home, Prof. Phillips sincerely rejected the life of dependency. "It would be insupportable not to have some money of one's own--to be unable to make any decision on one's own, not even something as trivial as whether to buy a present for a friend...to have to ask for money...it would be terrible. There are important and unimportant kinds of independence; financial independence is an essential. One can grow into independence, however. I can remember when I had trouble realizing that if I wasn't going to marry a man, then I couldn't expect him to come and help me when my car got a flat at 3:00 a.m.!"

Turning to university issues, I asked Prof. Phillips for her feelings on the Toike. Her reply was one frequently echoed by women in engineering: "When I was an undergrad, the jokes were off-colour but funny, now they're just obscene and not funny at all. Who really reads it anyway?"

Progressing to larger matters, Prof. Phillips was strongly supportive of women's colleges, such as Bryn Mawr where she earned her Master's degree. "They provide an almost nurturing atmosphere and can foster a solid sense of self-worth at a time in life when this is important. Women are also encouraged to excel academically and otherwise, in a manner that simply is not found in large co-ed universities such as U of T."

Prof. Phillips pondered the effects of the inclusion of women students in engineering and offered this comment. "The men may not appreciate the competition that the women provide. Indeed, the men can make life very difficult for women they feel don't conform to what they perceive as the woman's role."

It seems that the fury of the man upstaged by a woman knows no bounds. Whether the issue is who makes more money or who gets better marks, many men are unadept at handling the competition represented by an independent woman. Here's to independent women everywhere, whether or not they care to call themselves feminists. *OW*



Trudi Collins

Professor Jane Phillips in her office.

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a mockery because they implied 'status' that a Nursing cap could supposedly never provide. This year the nursing cap was where it should have been if it was going to be anywhere; the committee constructed a massive plywood nursing cap and proudly displayed it on the SAC dome; during Orientation Week. It represented more than one success story in nursing that week. Save for one or two events, all the sexist material was eliminated from the Orientation, according to Bays. This woman's hard work not only made this year's nursing orientation the least sexist ever, but also made it a fun-filled week. She confirmed that "we can have fun but we can also preserve our image".

Unfortunately what Bays does not mention is that 'preserving' Nursing's image is not necessarily a good thing, but is something orientation, regardless of superficial change, is bound to do. Due to the emphasis of orientation, most of the participants are female, heterosexual, single nursing students interested in meeting men. Thus the image of 'The Nurse' IS preserved; the myth that she is 'available' lives on. During Orientation Week onlookers would say that! THIS is Nursing.

But THIS is NOT Nursing; THIS is simply one aspect of Nursing. However, orientation continues to play up the 'femaleness' of the faculty for the ourpose of exposure to men as it has always done. In fact the priority of the orientation leaders should be to promote a group identity. The students do need a role to project to the public - but they need a positive role that can be shared by everyone and not just t hose who fit or want to fit the stereotype. Perhaps Mark Sanderson felt this need was not being met because he was a man; perhaps Caroline Bays felt the same way because she was a mature student who was also a single parent. They are certainly not alone.

It will take imagination and more hard work to change the structure of Orientation so that it will invite more of the Nursing frosh to participate. Only when all the Frosh feel free to and do share in the fun will a more realistic image of Nursing be projected. In Nursing there is a lot of work ahead in terms of changing the public image of the profession. The challenge continues. In the meantime it is exciting to know that Nursing students like Sanderson, Romanyk and Bays are making real efforts to meet that challenge. *OW*

Classifieds

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